

Application No.: 10/720,810

Reply to Office Action of July 13, 2005

Remarks / Arguments

Claims 1-53 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 25 and 48 have been amended as indicated hereinabove. New claims 54 and 55 have been added to alternatively define Applicant's invention.

Double Patenting

Claims 1-53 have been provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-40 of copending Application No. 10/914,666. A terminal disclaimer is being filed concurrently with this Amendment to overcome this rejection. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC 103

Claims 1-53 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Capowski et al. (Capowski) in view of Masone et al. (Masone). Capowski teaches a networked fire alarm system that includes a fire alarm control panel / system controller, connected via a network to multiple detectors and notification appliances. When fire or smoke is detected, the control panel may turn on one or many notification appliances within specified areas.

Masone, on the other hand, teaches a combination smoke detector and severe weather warning device, all contained within a common housing. Masone, column 4, lines 50-52. While there is provision for controlling remote audible/visual alarms (see references 44 and 46 of Masone, Fig. 1), such a unit is not appropriate for Capowski's system, i.e., a networked fire alarm system with a separate controller communicating with detectors and notification appliances.

The present invention integrates an externally-sourced hazard warning system with a fire alarm system. Specifically, neither Masone nor Capowski, alone or in combination, teach or suggest a warning detector that detects a warning alert from an external source and that reports that warning to a control panel which, in turn, transmits the warning to selected notification appliances on a fire alarm system network.

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Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the claimed system is a networked system having a distinct controller which communicates via a network with detectors and notification appliances, and which communicates with an external-source warning detector, wherein one or more of the notification appliances provides notification of the detected external-source warning. Neither Capowski nor Masone, alone or in combination, teach or suggest such a system. Reconsideration of claim 1 as amended in favor of allowance is therefore respectfully requested.

While allowance of dependent claims 2-24 should follow, with respect to claim 19, applicant takes particular exception to the Examiner's characterization that Capowski teaches a visual annunciator comprising plural visual indicators to indicate a current alert level. Capowski teaches multiple networked annunciators but says nothing about a single annunciator having plural visual indicators to indicate a current alert level. Applicant therefore respectfully requests reconsideration of claim 19 in favor of allowance regardless of the final disposition of its base and interceding claims.

Claim 25, an independent method claim, has been amended similarly to claim 1. Reconsideration in favor of allowance is respectfully requested. Allowance of dependent claims 26-47 should follow. The argument made above in favor of claim 19 applies as well to claim 42.

Claim 48 has similarly been amended. Allowance is respectfully requested. Allowance of dependent claim 49 should follow.

With respect to claim 50, for the same reasons as given above regarding both claims 1 and 19, applicant believes claim 50 is allowable without amendment, and respectfully requests reconsideration of claim 50 in favor of allowance.

A main idea behind the present invention is to use the NOAA alerting system (or other system) as the means for transmitting not natural disaster alerts, but rather Homeland Security Alerts, i.e., terrorism or other security threat alerts. Masone issued in 1999, prior to the events of Sept. 11, 2001, the formation of the Homeland Security Agency and the creation of the Homeland Security alerting system. Clearly, Masone

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could not have foreseen these events and was focused solely on using the NOAA system in its intended use as a severe weather warning system. The novelty of the present invention comes in part from the combined use of a fire alarm panel and a weather radio system to transmit non-weather-related warnings, e.g., security threats, without the added costs of a duplicative transmission system.

In this respect, new claim 54 is presented which specifically recites that the external source warning alert is of a security/terrorist nature. Neither Capowski nor Masone, alone or in combination, teach or suggest security or terrorist alerts combined in a fire alarm system. Allowance is therefore respectfully requested.

Similarly, new claim 55, which depends from claim 1, specifically recites that the external source warning alert is of a security/terrorist nature. Allowance of claim 55 is respectfully requested regardless of the final disposition of claim 1.

Specification

The specification has been amended first to include a paragraph in the BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS section with respect to FIG. 3; and second, to correct the reference numbers in the later description of FIG. 3

No new matter has been added to either the specification or the claims.

Applicants believe that the present application is in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance allowing claims 1-55 is respectfully solicited. Should any questions arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 10/11/05